

EMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER
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spicuous position, ought to be made a knight of the Legion of Honour.¹ Daudet, in this matter, was actuated by friendship and admiration, and Flaubert deemed himself to be under a great obligation to Zola. It seems that while Flaubert was writing his "Bouvard et Pe*cuchet" (which did not appear till after his death), he had often, spoken of it to his friends in a somewhat mysterious manner, never actually giving the names of his characters, but referring to them merely by their initials, B. and P. Zola was then working on "Son Excellence Eugene Eougon," and one day, when he and Flaubert met at a lunch given by M. Charpentier, he mentioned that a capital name had occurred to him for one of his characters, this name being Bouvard, which, with its suggestion of blotting-paper, was certainly a fit appellation for a civil service scribe. It so happened — such is coincidence — that Zola and Flaubert proposed to bestow it on much the same type of man; but the former, of course, was quite ignorant of his friend's intentions, for Flaubert, restricting himself to the initial B., had never allowed the word Bouvard to escape his lips. When it fell from Zola's, the author of "Madame Bovary" was greatly upset. "He became quite strange," wrote Zola

on subsequently relating the incident, " and
after lunch he
took me to the bottom of Oharpentier's garden,
where, with
a great show of emotion, he implored me to
surrender the
name of Bouvard to him. I assented,
laughing; but he
remained very grave, plainly touched, and
even declared
that he would not have persevered with his
book if I had
insisted on using the name. He looked
upon his work as

¹ Alexis, *I. c.*, p. 190 *et seq.* ; Adolphe Brisson in. " Le
Temps," October 3,
1902.